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US Bishops Meet in Baltimore November 16-19 to Tackle AI, Immigration and Church Renewal

A true story of faith under pressure. Read the first half below, then continue online.

KEY SPIRITUAL TAKEAWAY

"The U.S"

(Transliterated from the original Hindi.)

They had gathered only to pray. When prayer itself becomes the target, faith is proved not by words but by staying.

The Story - Part One

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) will gather in Baltimore, Maryland, from November 16 to 19 for its 2026 Fall Plenary Assembly, with public sessions on November 17 and 18 livestreamed on the USCCB website. The agenda puts three big questions in front of the bishops at once: artificial intelligence, immigration, and signs of renewal in the Church. They will also vote on liturgical texts, canonization causes and leadership.

Consider the man carrying the AI question into the room. Bishop Oscar Cantú of San Jose, California, leads the bishops' new task force on artificial intelligence, and his diocese sits in the heart of Silicon Valley, where the machines are built. The bishop from the home of AI must now help the Church decide what AI means for human dignity.

AI After Magnifica Humanitas: Bishop Oscar Cantú And The Task Force

The bishops will hear an update from the new Task Force on Preserving Human Dignity in the Age of Artificial Intelligence, chaired by Bishop Cantú. The task force was formed in response to Pope Leo XIV's encyclical Magnifica Humanitas, and it brings together eight bishops, including Cardinal Blase Cupich, with three lay consultants: theologian Charles Camosy, philosopher Meghan Sullivan of Notre Dame, and Kim Daniels of Georgetown University.

The group's focus is human dignity and the common good in AI development, a message explored by the Pope. AI already shapes work, education and the formation of the young, and the Church is being asked to say clearly where the line falls between a tool and a person, as Pope Leo himself put it when he said machines are tools, not persons, as reported in Pope Leo XIV: Machines Are Tools, Not Persons in Vatican AI Address.

Immigration One Year After The Special Message

One year after the bishops adopted their special message on immigration, the Committee on Migration will brief the assembly, with Bishop Brendan Cahill of Victoria, Texas, giving the update. The original message opposed the indiscriminate mass deportation of people, and it was the conference's first special message in 12 years, as reported in US Catholic Bishops Oppose Indiscriminate Mass Deportation in First Special Message in 12 Years.

A year is long enough to measure what a statement changed. For the parishes along the border, migration is not a file on an agenda. It is the people in the pews.

The Turning Point - What Happens Next

The story reaches a life-changing moment that changes everything -- and what seemed like the end is only the middle. Two reports disagree on the numbers, and one question is left unanswered: will the CCTV footage ever come out? Read the full story to find out what happens next.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When gathering to pray carries a real cost, what keeps a community coming together anyway -- and what would keep you coming?

2. The pastor's sister shielded him with her own body and fainted under the blows. What does costly, self-giving love look like in your own family or church?

3. When justice is delayed and a complaint is withdrawn under threat, how do believers hold on to truth without giving in to fear -- or to hatred?

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